

EDC Dialogue

An electronic newsletter to share information and activities for and about the Educators with Disabilities Caucus

EDC is a Caucus of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

This newsletter is disseminated quarterly as a means for the caucus to share information, activities, and resources. We welcome your contributions and suggestions for continuously improving this newsletter. Please send your submissions to Judy Shanley at jshanley@air.org.

Our Mission

To support and advocate for educators with disabilities in teacher training and professional settings.

Message from the EDC Chair

Nancy Anderson, Chair 2005-2006

Greetings to our EDC members and newsletter subscribers!

In this issue, be sure to read the following sections and articles:

- ❖ First Year Teacher with a Disability Teaching Special Education Students
- ❖ EDC at CEC's Multicultural Summit in Salt Lake City, Utah

Thank you for supporting EDC as a member or subscriber! If you have any questions, please be sure to email me at Nanders7@gmu.edu Have a great summer vacation! Enjoy this issue of *EDC Dialogue*.

Nancy Anderson, EDC Chair

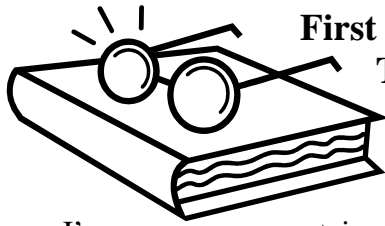


Hot Topics

[ED Reports on States' Progress on Highly Qualified Provision](#)

The Education Department has released the results of a state-by-state examination of progress that states are making toward the NCLB requirement that all teachers be highly qualified by the 2005-06 deadline. According to the Department, no state is likely to meet the 100 percent goal by the end of this school year, but 29 states are on track to meet it and have shown sufficient good-faith efforts. However, ED has also determined that 11 states risk federal sanctions because their progress has not been sufficient. The deadline for obtaining highly qualified status has been extended from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2006-2007 school year.

Perspectives from the Field



First Year Educator with a Disability: Trials and Tribulations of Teaching a Special Education Class

Shandi Redmon, Special Educator
Lafayette, Louisiana

I'm uncertain about other beginning educators would say about their first year, but I both dreaded and looked forward to it. When I was an undergraduate in training, it was a positive and encouraging start for me. Before I started, I contemplated whether this first year of teaching my own class would turn out to be a great start to my professional career or would it be very hard for me?

Like most beginning teachers in their first year of teaching. I had typical thoughts of doubt and excited anticipation. However, I had other thoughts and concerns because I was also a new teacher with a disability. I was hard of hearing. My first hurdle was when I was interviewed, and hired and thus got my first class. All I could think about was:

- Am I going to make anyone uncomfortable?*
- Do they know and realize that I can do this job or do they doubt me?*
- Do they have any understanding of my disability?*
- Will they accommodate me?*
- How could they accommodate me as a hard of hearing person teaching hearing special education students?*

As my year was completed, I have been reflecting on it. I was pleasantly surprised to see the vast variations of patience and understanding that occurred by “educating” my colleagues, students and parents on how to communicate and understand me. As a new beginning teacher. I tried to hide and “make-up” for my disability. I did this subconsciously, so that no one would notice or see whether or not being hard of hearing was affecting my performance or progress with the students. Some of the normal activities I struggled with were teaching phonics, understanding some students’ speech, and hearing someone knock at my classroom door in which I couldn’t hear.

How did I face these challenges and how did I resolve them? One realization and solution was that being a teacher with a hearing loss meant that I had to stop teaching phonics and have one of my paraprofessionals take over because I had trouble hearing and making some of the taught sounds. Another challenge I discovered about teaching on my own was that I had to have one of my paraprofessionals verbally interpret, or repeat, for me what was being said by certain students. I just couldn’t understand their speech. That was really frustrating and difficult for me to accept. And my last discovery or challenge was that I realized I needed to ask my students to tell me when someone was at my door knocking.

Did these challenges that I faced ever make me feel inadequate? Yes! And sometimes on a daily basis however, through all this I learned that the challenges I faced were actually positive for me and for my class. My students and I went through a learning curve together and they take pride in being responsible and helpful to me. They would remind each other to face me when speaking

and to speak loud and clear. We learned more from each other through this experience than I would have ever thought or imagined.

In my reflections of this past year, I would like to leave you with three concepts that helped me get through my first year as a special educator with a disability:

- **Be patient:** Model and teach your students and colleagues patience and understanding, especially when it is related to working with a teacher with a disability.
- **Educate:** Sharing the nature of my disability with everyone helped those who worked with me. It also helped me to become my own best advocate. Most of the time, people are unaware until someone teaches them about the disability.
- **Teach students about their own disabilities and advocate for themselves:** By following my example. By modeling and teaching my students that it is alright to have a disability, we learned together that we can be successful in whatever we want to do in life.

In conclusion, being an educator with a disability and teaching students with disabilities was a great challenge this year. It also became a wonderful learning experience for me professionally in many ways. Most importantly, all of the common mistakes or challenges faced by any first year teacher did indeed happen to me. I just had a few more than most. I got through my first year and I have pride and honor as I reflect on this past year. I consider my first year of teaching to be very successful, mistakes and all!

If you have comments or questions for Shandi Redmon, please email her at: slr2159@yahoo.com

Key Activities of EDC

EDC officers, with the support of CEC Advisors, revised its ***EDC Organizational Guidelines*** document. This resource is used by the EDC Caucus for several purposes including guiding caucus operations and procedures, informing new and current members of EDC procedures, and serving as foundation for EDC activities and progress. We hope you will review these guidelines, available through the EDC section of the CEC Web site at <http://www.cec.sped.org/diversity/edc.html>.

Please direct any comments or questions to Nancy Anderson at nanders7@gmu.edu

Scholarships and Internships

Scholarships for Women with Disabilities in Graduate School The Ethel Louise Armstrong Foundation

This sponsor provides scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 per year to any woman with a physical disability who is pursuing graduate studies at a college or university in the United States.

Eligible applicants are women with physical disabilities. Applicants must be currently accepted to a graduate program working towards a Masters degree or above in an



accredited college or university in the United States. Applicants must be active in a local, state, or national disability organization. The award is to offset tuition costs only. Deadline: 06/01/2006

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Member Happenings

EDC Member Represents Educators with Disabilities at CEC's Multicultural Summit

At the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) annual convention, a *Multicultural Summit* is held each year to help promote and embrace diversity for special educators and related services personnel. Each year the Summit offers a slightly different program. This year the Summit program featured a special panel of guest speakers that included representation from CEC's Caucus, diversity, and division committees. These individuals were invited to describe how their unit may be addressing diversity in its activities, its diversity goals and diversity-related topics that are of particular interest or concern to the unit's membership. The Educators with Disabilities Caucus (EDC) asked Pamela De Loach, Special Education Teacher from Florida and an EDC Board Advisor to participate as EDC's representative. EDC thanks Ms. De Loach for attending this Summit. Below is a summary report from her.

This year's Summit was interesting and was enlightening. The focus of this year's meeting was on ensuring appropriate services to all individuals with disabilities, including those from diverse backgrounds. There were presentations offered, as well as, personal stories shared by panel members. Ms. De Loach shared EDC's history, its mission, and mentoring program. During the second part of the Summit there was a group activity entitled "Come to the Table". At this activity, participants and panel members had an informal discussion about diversity of personnel in special education. One important discovery during the round table discussion was that everyone was also concerned about diversity issues for special education students.

Highlights of the Multicultural Summit

What participants and attendees had to say:

- ❖ Why is the summit held on last day of conferences instead earlier in the conference?
- ❖ How can the attendees of the summit help with diversity issues?
- ❖ How do we get more sessions dealing with diversity at the conference?

What participants asked EDC at the Summit:

- ❖ How do we get our students with disabilities who are interested in teaching involved with EDC?

- ❖ Attendees, included college and university professors wanted know more about EDC's mentoring program and how to get their students involved.

Note: EDC will follow up with these requests and work with the Diversity Committee to get information shared with those interested in EDC. Ms. De Loach has provided this group with the EDC Web site address. EDC encourages those interested in learning more about EDC and its mentoring program to please contact Nancy Anderson at nanders7@gmu.edu.

For more details, or questions about this year's Multicultural Summit, please contact the Chair of the CEC Diversity Committee, Dr. Shernaz Garcia by emailing her at sbgarcia@mail.utexas.edu. Questions about EDC's participation on the CEC Diversity Committee, please contact Nancy Anderson, EDC Chair and Diversity Committee member at nanders7@gmu.edu



Important Resources

***Educational Enhancement for the Field of Deaf Education (DeafED)**

<http://www.deafed.net/>

Mission Statement:

- To enhance the preparation of new teachers.
- To support the ongoing professional development of existing teachers.
- To expand the array of learning resources and opportunities that are available to deaf/hard-of-hearing (d/hh) students.
- To increase collaborative activities between all those individuals involved in the education of d/hh students.

This site is a result of two projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education's [PT3](#) initiative. These grants, awarded to the Association of College Educators of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing ([ACE-D/HH](#)), are referred to as *Join Together* and *Catalyst* (for more information on these projects, please visit our [grant portal](#) page).

***Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD)**

<http://www.ahead.org/>

AHEAD is the premiere professional association committed to full participation of persons with disabilities in postsecondary education.

***Comprehensive School Reform Quality (CSRQ) Center Releases Report on School Improvement and Students with Disabilities**

The CSRQ Center at the American Institutes for Research, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education recently produced a checklist to help educators to implement strategies to include students with disabilities in school reform and improvement models. [Questions That Educators Can Ask About the Participation of Students With Disabilities in School Reform and Improvement Models](#) [PDF, 215 KB] is a considerations checklist that can be used by educators to assess the capacity of school reform and improvement models to address the needs of students with disabilities. This checklist supplements the CSRQ Center's [Enhancing Participation](#) guide that offers strategies to enhance the engagement of students with disabilities in school reform models. Educators are also encouraged to use this checklist in conjunction with [CSRQ Center Reports](#) that provide guidance on the effectiveness and quality of widely implemented elementary, middle, and high school CSR models and Education Service Providers (ESPs).

Key People

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We welcome your contributions and suggestions regarding this newsletter. If you are interested in volunteering to write a section of this electronic newsletter on a quarterly basis,

please contact Judy Shanley at jshanley@air.org



The voice and vision of special education